

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of providing language interpretation between a first person and a second person in visual contact with one another, comprising:
 - receiving from the remote language interpreter an audio signal emitted by the interpreter and video images of the interpreter;
 - outputting the audio signal emitted by the interpreter;
 - displaying the video images of the interpreter on a first display viewable by the first person while the first person maintains visual contact with the second person; and
 - displaying the video images of the interpreter on a second display viewable by the second person while the second person maintains visual contact with the first person.
2. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the language is sign language.
3. The method defined in claim 1, further comprising:
 - transmitting to a remote language interpreter video images of the first person, video images of the second person and an audio signal emitted by at least the second person;
4. The method defined in claim 3, further comprising:
 - using a first video camera to capture the video images of the first person.
5. The method defined in claim 4, the first video camera being mounted to the first display.

6. The method defined in claim 5, further comprising:

- using a second video camera to capture the video images of the second person.

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7. The method defined in claim 6, the second video camera being mounted to the second display.

8. The method defined in claim 7, further comprising:

- 10 - using a first microphone to capture the audio signal emitted by at least the second person.

9. The method defined in claim 8, further comprising:

- 15 - using an amplifier to output the audio signal emitted by the interpreter.

10. The method defined in claim 9, further comprising:

- canceling echo in the audio signal captured by the microphone caused by the audio signal output by the amplifier, thereby to create the audio signal emitted by at least the second person.

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11. The method defined in claim 10, further comprising:

- compressing the video images of the second person to a greater degree than the video images of the first person prior to transmission of the video images of the first and second persons to the remote language interpreter.

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12. The method defined in claim 11, wherein the language is sign language.

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13. The method defined in claim 10, further comprising:

- compressing the video images of the first person and the video images of the second person prior to transmission thereof to the remote language interpreter.

5 14. The method defined in claim 13, further comprising:

- decompressing the video images of the interpreter prior to display thereof on the first and second displays.

15. The method defined in claim 14, further comprising:

- 10 - using separate processors to perform the compressing and the decompressing, respectively.

16. The method defined in claim 15, further comprising:

- 15 - converting the decompressed video images of the interpreter into a format suitable for display by the first and second displays.

17. The method defined in claim 16, further comprising:

- 20 - compressing the audio signal emitted by at least the second person prior to transmission thereof to the remote language interpreter.

18. The method defined in claim 17, further comprising:

- 25 - decompressing the audio signal emitted by the interpreter prior to output thereof by the amplifier.

19. The method defined in claim 8, wherein the first video camera and the first display are oriented in a first direction, the method further comprising:

- 30 - adjusting the first direction in which the first video camera and the first display are oriented.

20. The method defined in claim 19, wherein the second video camera and the second display are oriented in a second direction, the method further comprising:

- adjusting the second direction in which the second video camera and the second display are oriented.

21. The method defined in claim 20, wherein the video images of the interpreter are conveyed by a received video stream, the method further comprising:

- splitting the received video stream into first and second sub-streams;
- feeding the first and second sub-streams to the first and second displays, respectively.

22. The method defined in claim 21, wherein splitting the received video stream into first and second sub-streams is performed by hardware splitting of a video signal carrying the received video stream, resulting in creation of the first and second sub-streams.

23. The method defined in claim 21, wherein splitting the received video stream into first and second sub-streams is performed by software duplication of data carried by the received video stream, resulting in creation of the first and second sub-streams.

24. A method of facilitating language communication between a first person and a second person proximate one another, comprising:

- providing a first visual communication link between the first person and a remote language interpreter;
- providing a second visual communication link between the second person and the remote language interpreter;

- providing an audio communication link between the second person and the remote language interpreter;
- the first and second visual communication links and the audio communication link being provided while the first and second persons are in visual contact with each other.

25. The method defined in claim 24, wherein the language is sign language.

26. A system for providing language interpretation between a first person and a second person located proximate one another, comprising:

- first video capture means for capturing video images of the first person;
- second video capture means for capturing video images of the second person;
- means for capturing an audio signal emitted by at least the second person;
- means for outputting an audio signal conveying information resulting from language interpretation of the video images of the first person;
- means for displaying video images conveying language information resulting from interpretation of the audio signal emitted by at least the second person and the video images of the second person.

27. The system defined in claim 26, wherein the language is sign language.

28. A signal tangibly embodied in a transmission medium, comprising:

- in a first direction:

- a first video stream conveying video images of a first person;
- a second video stream conveying video images of a second person; and
- 5 - a first audio stream conveying an audio signal emitted by at least the second person;
- in a second direction opposite the first direction:
 - a third video stream conveying language information resulting from interpretation of the audio signal
 - 10 emitted by the at least second person and the video images of the second person; and
 - a second audio stream conveying information resulting from sign language interpretation of the video images of the first person.

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29. A system for providing language interpretation between a first person and a second person in visual contact with one another, comprising:

- means for receiving from the remote language interpreter
- 20 an audio signal emitted by the interpreter and video images of the interpreter;
- means for outputting the audio signal emitted by the interpreter;
- means for displaying the video images of the interpreter
- 25 on a first display viewable by the first person while the first person maintains visual contact with the second person; and
- means for displaying the video images of the interpreter
- 30 on a second display viewable by the second person while the second person maintains visual contact with the first person.